U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2005-004-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): Rangely Weber Sand Unit

PROJECT NAME: Chevron Field injection flow line

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian
T.2N, R.102W, sec. 18

APPLICANT: Chevron Production Company

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional):

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: Chevron proposes to construct an injection line to tie into injection wells Gray B 9 and Gray B 5 to the main line at Gray B 10. This lateral line will be two sections of 1267 feet and 1584 feet (total 2851) of 3-inch Star High Pressure fiber glass.

Lines will be buried with approximately 42 inches of cover with marker tape and stakes throughout. The requested 40 foot right-of-way will be fully reclaimed to current BLM Specifications and Stipulations.

Surface disturbance for this project is approximately 2851' X 40' for a total of 2.62 acres.

No Action Alternative: The injection lines would not be permitted and there would be no new surface disturbance.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION: To respond to the request by applicant to exercise lease rights and develop hydrocarbon reserves.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Page 2-5

Decision Language: "Make federal oil and gas resources available for leasing and development in a manner that provides reasonable protection for other resource values."

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: There are no special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas nearby that would be affected by the proposed action. During periods of low precipitation, air quality in the area of the proposed action is often diminished by dust caused by human disturbance.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would result in short term, local impacts to air quality during and after construction, due to dust being blown into the air. After adequate vegetation is reestablished, blowing dust should return to pre-construction levels.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No increase in dust will occur.

Mitigation: Require water spreading on the road surfaces to control fugitive dust and to help minimize short-term impacts.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed injection lines are within the Rangely Field which is covered by an inventory (Larralde 1981, Compliance Dated2/18/1981) and is covered by an agreement with the Colorado SHPO. There are no known cultural resources in the proposed pipeline route.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed pipeline will not impact any known cultural resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no new impacts to cultural resources under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: 1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: The project area contains the undesirable and invasive annual plant species, halogeton, and cheatgrass which are highly adapted to invading and dominating disturbed soils in the area. Because of austere growth conditions, low precipitation and saline soils, reclamation is difficult. Other noxious weeds of concern include Russian, spotted and diffuse knapweeds. These weeds have a wide environmental tolerance and potential to invade the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Cheatgrass and halogeaton are expected to invade the site. The success of reclamation will dictate the density and extent of cheatgrass and halogeaton. There is also the opportunity for construction equipment and support vehicles to transport, introduce and distribute noxious weed species within the project area. With noxious weed treatment as specified in mitigation, there are not expected to be any adverse impacts to the adjacent native plant communities.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no additional impacts.

Mitigation: Concurrence with mitigation contained in the vegetation section.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The project area is encompassed by arid salt desert shrublands consisting principally of basin big sagebrush, shadscale and Gardner saltbush. Herbaceous ground cover along the proposed injection lines is dominated primarily by halogeton. These salt desert communities typically support species such as horned lark and western meadowlark.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Earthwork associated with this project is expected to be completed in advance of the nesting season and would have no potential to interfere materially with nests. Any involvement with suitable nest habitat would be minor, as these community types comprise about 10,000 acres in Chevron Field.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have potential to influence the reproductive activities or habitat of migratory birds.

Mitigation: None

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: The area which surrounds the proposed injection lines is broadly encompassed by white-tailed prairie dog (WTPD) habitat. Field inspections conducted in November indicate evidence of occupation by prairie dogs along the proposed corridor however, the number of burrows directly involved is minor (Table 1).

Prairie dogs and their burrow systems are important components of burrowing owl habitat, as well as potential habitat for reintroduced populations of black-footed ferret. Burrowing owls, a State threatened species are uncommon in this Resource Area. These birds return to occupy a maintained burrow system in early April and begin nesting soon after. Most birds have left the area by September. While burrowing owls have been documented in Chevron Field, no burrowing owl nesting activity has been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposed injection lines.

Under the auspices of a non-essential, experimental population rule, black-footed ferrets have been released annually in Coyote Basin (eight miles southwest) and Wolf Creek (13 miles northeast) of Chevron Field since 1999 and 2001, respectively. This rule applies to any ferrets that may occupy or eventually be released in northwest Colorado and northeast Utah. Although there is no direct continuity between Coyote Basin or Wolf Creek and the project site, there is a strong likelihood that ferrets have colonized and successfully breed in Chevron Field. Ferrets are wholly reliant on prairie dogs for food and shelter. Ferret breeding activities begin in early March, with birthing beginning in early May. Young ferrets generally begin to emerge by mid-July. There have been no verified sightings of ferrets, nor any known reproduction occurring in Chevron Field.

Table 1. WTPD burrows affected by the construction of Gray B injection lines

Site	Feet	Acres	Single entrance affected	Single entrance ROW
Gray B 10 to Gray B 5	1267	1.17	2	3
Gray B 5 to Gray B 9	1584	1.45	17	2
Total	**2851**	**2.62**	**19**	**5**

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: With regards to burrowing owl, prairie dog and ferret breeding issues – all earthwork should be completed outside the period between 1 April and 15 July. Avoiding this timeframe would provide sufficient time for the rearing, emergence, and dispersal of young from natal burrows and effectively eliminate the likelihood of adversely affecting these animals' reproductive efforts. Chevron has agreed to trench the injection line and clear the injection line right-of-way prior to 1 April. Until burrowing owls arrive on these breeding ranges in April, there is no credible means of assessing impacts to nest activity. In the event earthwork associated with this project cannot be completed prior to early April, BLM would conduct nest surveys on affected injection line segments and conditions of approval would be applied to defer activities that may interfere with successful nest outcomes (under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act). The construction of these injection lines would have no direct affect on the reproductive success of black-footed ferrets as the probability of any subsurface disturbance intersecting a prairie dog burrow system occupied by a ferret would be extremely remote.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no potential influence on prairie dogs as habitat for burrowing owl and black-footed ferret in the case of a no action alternative.

Mitigation: Earthwork involving prairie dog burrow systems would be conducted outside the period of April 1 to July 15 to avoid the remote chance of disrupting the reproductive

activities of ferrets, burrowing owl, and prairie dogs. Any surface disturbance associated with these injection lines should be revegetated and rehabilitated with the appropriated seed mixture and reclamation technique(s) as is required by the Authorized Officer.

In the event earthwork associated with this project cannot be completed prior to early April, BLM would conduct nest surveys on affected injection line segments and conditions of approval would be applied to defer activities that may interfere with successful nest outcomes (under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act).

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Public Land Health Standards for those special status species associated with white-tailed prairie dogs, including black-footed ferret and burrowing owl, in Chevron Field are currently met. As conditioned, this project would have no adverse influence on populations, available extent of suitable habitat, or the reproductive activities of these three species. Thus, there would be no influence on meeting the land health standard. Small incremental gains in perennial grass cover associated with successful reclamation associated with injection line installation may be expected to bolster local populations of prairie dogs and potentially benefit individual burrowing owl and black-footed ferret—effects consistent with continued meeting of the Land Health Standards.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored or disposed of at sites included in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials in excess of threshold quantities are proposed for use in this project. While commercial preparations of fuels and lubricants proposed for use may contain some hazardous constituents, they would be stored, used and transported in a manner consistent with applicable laws, and the generation of hazardous wastes would not be anticipated. Solid wastes would be properly disposed of.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no-action alternative.

Mitigation: The operator shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed actions.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The flowlines are in Stinking Water Gulch which is tributary to the White River below Rangely Colorado and the White River above the state line. Limited data is available for Stinking Water and this lower end of the White River. Past instantaneous

measurements of flow and water quality for Stinking Water Gulch indicate the water to be high in total dissolved solids. An historic gaging station was located on the White River at the State line. This data indicated the water quality to good, but high in sediment during storm events. A review of the Colorado's 1989 Nonpoint Source Assessment Report (plus updates), the 305(b) report, the 303(d) list and the Unified Watershed Assessment was done to see if any water quality concerns have been identified. This proposed action is in a Category 1, Priority 2, watershed (The Lower White) identified in the Unified Watershed Assessment report. The state has reasons to believe this watershed has water quality problems (sediment and salinity loads) that may impair the watershed. Information needs to be gathered before total maximum daily loads (TMDL) will be determined.

The State has classified this stream segment as Aquatic Life Warm 1, Recreation 1a, Water Supply and Agriculture. The state has further defined water quality parameters with table values. These standards reflect the ambient water quality and define maximum allowable concentrations for the various water quality parameters. The anti-degradation rule applies to this segment meaning no further water quality degradation is allowable that would interfere with or become harmful to the designated uses.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Impacts to water quality from development of these pipelines would be similar to other surface disturbing activities. Some of the impacts would be exposure of soil surface to wind and water erosion, reduced water quality due to erosion of sediment and salt, off pipeline rights of ways, and piping or rill erosion where pipeline disturbance are exposed to climatic elements. These impacts would be short term until re-vegetation has occurred.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impacts from the no-action alternative are anticipated.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: Currently Stinking Water Creek meets the State standards; the proposed action will not change this status and its ability to meet the criteria set by the state.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: There are not any wetlands or riparian communities within eight miles of the project site.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: This project would have no conceivable potential for influencing riparian attributes addressed in the Standards.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No ACEC's, flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, Wilderness, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: Baseline soils data have been collected for Rio Blanco County by the NRCS and are published in an order III Soil Survey. This survey is available for review from the White River Field Office. The table below identifies soil characteristics for the soil types intersected by the proposed action.

Soil Number	Soil Name	Slope	Ecological Site	Salinity	Run Off	Erosion Potential	Bedrock
7	Billings silty clay loam	0-5%	Alkaline Slopes	2-8	Rapid	Moderate to high	>60
16	Chipeta silty clay loam	3-25%	Clayey Saltdesert	4-16	Rapid	High	10-20
17	Chipeta silty clay loam eroded		Clayey Saltdesert	4-16	Rapid	Very high	10-20

The majority of the project is in the Chipeta silty clay loam, which is a shallow, well drained soil on low, rolling hills and on toe slopes. It formed in residuum derived from calcareous, gypsiferous shale. Areas are irregular in shape and are 20 to 1,000 acres in size. The native vegetation is mainly sparse stands of salt-tolerant desert shrubs and grasses. Elevation is 5,100 to 5,800 feet. The average annual precipitation is 7 to 9 inches, the average annual air temperature is 46 to 50 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 105 to 135 days.

Typically, the surface layer is light brownish gray silty clay loam 2 inches thick. The underlying material is light brownish gray silty clay that has fine chips of shale and seams of crystalline gypsum and is about 10 inches thick. Shale is at a depth of 12 inches. Depth to shale ranges from 10 to 20 inches. Permeability of the Chipeta soil is slow. Available water capacity is very low. Effective rooting depth is 7 to 20 inches. Runoff is rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is very high.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Short-term impacts would be expected from any surface disturbing activity. Impacts from the proposed action would be loss of the protective vegetation cover, possible increase in salt and sedimentation during storm events and soil compaction from trenching equipment. These impacts could continue until successful re-vegetation has occurred.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: In the no-action alternative, neither the surface disturbance nor the impacts to soils resources would occur.

Mitigation: Re-establishing vegetation as soon as allowable would be favorable to control any erosion problems that may occur. Best management practices will need to be implemented to collect salts leaching from soils if it becomes a problem on the surface. In addition, the following COA from Appendix B, White River ROD/RMP should be applied.

When erosion is anticipated, sediment barriers shall be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site. In addition, straining or filtration mechanisms may also contribute to sediment removal from runoff

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: Soils at the proposed location do not meet the criteria established in the Public Land Health Standard. The proposed action would not change this status.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located within Alkaline Slope and Clayey Saltdesert ecological sites, which are dominated by salt tolerant vegetation. The dominate plant community for these sites consist of greasewood, various saltbrushes (shadscale, Gardner saltbrush, fourwing, etc.), low rabbitbrush, and big sagebrush. The understory of these shrubs is dominated by western wheatgrass, salina wildrye, and squirreltail. Cheatgrass is an undesirable, invasive, and alien plant species that is prevalent within the locality of the proposed action.

The soils within the project area are principally a Billings Silty Clay Loam (Alkaline Slope ecological site) and Chipeta silty Clay Loam (Clayey Saltdesert ecological site). These soil types have a high clay content that is moderate to highly erosive and receives low precipitation with rapid runoff, thus limiting forage production and hampering re-vegetation efforts.

Drought conditions are very prevalent within the Coal Oil Basin area, which has hampered the successful establishment of reclaimed plant species of other projects in this area. Therefore, undesirable and invasive annual plant species (i.e. halogeton, cheatgrass) have become dominate in a portion of these disturbed areas which provide little resource value.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would disturb a low seral class of desert shrub community for a total of 2.62 acres. The short-term soil and vegetation disturbances would be offset in the long-term by reclaiming the disturbed area

with a seed mix that is suited for this ecological site. As this area has a significant component of cheatgrass and halogeton within the plant community, successful re-vegetation efforts would increase desirable plant species within the rangelands.

Previously this area has entailed considerable impacts from oil and gas activities from a network of well pads, pipeline corridors, and access roads, which have resulted in a fragmentation and reduction of available, productive ecological sites.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas associated with the proposed action, with Standard Seed Mix #1 of the White River ROD/RMP (Page B-19, Appendix B). Seeding rates in the RMP are shown as pounds of Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre and apply to drill seeding. For broadcast application, double the seeding rate and then harrow to insure seed coverage. The applicant will be responsible for eradicating cheatgrass, noxious weeds, and/or problem weeds should they occur and/or increase in density as a result of the proposed action. The applicant will use materials and methods authorized in advance by the White River Field Office Manager.

Standard Seed Mix #1

Seed Mix #	Species (Variety)	Lbs PLS/ Acre	Range sites
1	Siberian wheatgrass (P27) Russian wildrye (Bozoisky) Crested wheatgrass (Hycrest)	3 2 3	Alkaline Uplands, Badlands, Clayey 7"-9", Clayey Salt Desert, Cold Desert Breaks, Cold Desert Overflow, Gravelly 7"-9", Limey Cold Desert, Loamy 7"-9", Loamy Cold Desert, Loamy Salt Desert, Saline Lowland, Salt Desert Breaks, Salt Flats, Salt Meadow Sands 7"-9", Sandy 7"-9", Sandy Cold Desert, Sandy Salt Desert, Shale 7"-9", Shale/Sands Complex, Shallow Loamy, Shallow Sandy, Shallow Slopes, Silty Salt Desert, Silty Swale, Steep

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial)*:* The proposed action would disturb a small segment of the Alkaline Slope and Clayey Saltdesert ecological sites. Therefore, the action would further fragment these areas to a minimal degree.

The locality of the proposed action lacks desirable plant species at an appreciable density and frequency level. This is due to the prevalence of cheatgrass and halogeton within the vegetative understory. A positive benefit would be received through a successful re-vegetation effort, thus increasing preferred plant species within this low producing rangeland.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: There are no aquatic habitats conceivably affected by this action. The White River, representing the nearest aquatic habitat, is separated from the project area by about eight miles of ephemeral channel.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): This project would have no conceivable influence on aquatic habitat conditions addressed in the Standards.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Chevron Field is inhabited year-round by a small resident herd of pronghorn. These animals are acclimated to routine oil and gas production activities. A number of raptors forage opportunistically during the winter in Chevron Field, the most common being rough-legged hawks, red-tailed hawks, and golden eagle. The project area and the surrounding area provide no special or unique habitat features (e.g., nesting substrate) or forage base for these birds.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: This project, as mitigated, would have no conceivable adverse consequences on big game distribution or habitat quality. Right-of-way reclamation normally provides herbaceous forage opportunity in excess of that previously existing and in many cases will replace halogeton-dominated understories almost immediately after construction is complete. While surface disturbance would cause a longer-term reduction in woody forage supply, the incremental shrub reductions are wholly insignificant with respect to the available forage base. Standard reclamation procedures would provide the opportunity to increase the perennial grass component on these corridors in the longer term, increasing ground cover and seed production and prolonging the availability of green herbaceous forage for resident big and non-game animals.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Post-construction reclamation normally provides herbaceous forage opportunity in excess of that previously existing, and in many cases will replace halogeton-dominated understories. There would be no opportunity under the no-action alternative to improve herbaceous ground cover and composition along the existing right-of-way as cover and/or forage for resident wildlife in the long term.

Mitigation: See mitigation for T&E Species section above.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): Much of the ground cover within Chevron Field is dominated by annual weeds. Although these sites in and of themselves cannot be considered meeting the

definition of the land health standard, the majority of the shrubland communities comprising this landscape likely retain sufficient character to support viable populations of resident wildlife, although likely at populations reduced from potential. Subsequent reclamation offers an opportunity to reestablish herbaceous forage and cover conditions (i.e., redevelopment of a perennial bunchgrass component) more consistent with the proper functioning of these arid salt desert communities as wildlife habitat, thus better opportunity to meet the land health standard.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights	X		
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise		X	
Paleontology			X
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation		X	
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The proposed pipelines are located in an area mapped as the Mancos Shale (Tweto 1979) which the BLM has classified as a Condition II formation meaning that it is known to produce invertebrate fossils, usually marine, with rare vertebrates.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There is a limited potential to impact scientifically important fossils as a result of this project.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no new impacts to fossil resources under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials, and contact the authorized officer (AO). The operator and the authorized officer will consult and

determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in the Artesia Allotment (06308), which is authorized for sheep use by Morapos Sheep during the late fall to early spring periods.

The soils within the project area are principally a Billings Silty Clay Loam (Alkaline Slope ecological site) and Chipeta silty Clay Loam (Clayey Saltdesert ecological site), which are dominated by a salt tolerant desert shrub and grass community. These brush/grass communities are utilized by sheep for meeting forage requirements, particularly during winter months. These soil types have a high clay content that are moderate to highly erosive and receives low precipitation with rapid runoff, thus limiting forage production and hampering re-vegetation efforts.

Drought conditions are very prevalent within the Coal Oil Basin area, which has hampered the successful establishment of reclaimed plant species of other projects in this area. Therefore, undesirable and invasive annual plant species (i.e. halogeton, cheatgrass) have become dominate in a portion of these disturbed areas which provide little forage value for livestock.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The individual proposed action would have minimal impacts on the authorized grazing use because the amount of new surface disturbance (2.62 acres) is nominal in regards to the scale of the allotment (43,347 total acres). However, previously this allotment has entailed considerable impacts from oil and gas activities, which have resulted in a reduction and fragmentation of available rangelands and in a loss of forage for grazing use.

A portion of the short-term soil and vegetation disturbances would be offset in the long-term by reclaiming the disturbed area with a seed mix that is suited for this ecological site. As this area has a significant component of cheatgrass and halogeton within the plant community, successful re-vegetation efforts would increase desirable forage species within the rangelands.

Grazing use by sheep in the Allotment can be authorized from November 28th through April 20th. The proposed action would have some limited impacts during this timeframe while sheep are grazing. This is due to the increased activity associated with the development of the proposed action and temporary decrease in rangelands available for grazing. Impacts to livestock grazing may include such influences as a modification in sheep distribution, reduction in available forage, and impediments to livestock grazing and movement.

Overall, this individual proposed action would have no significant direct impact on the authorized Animal Unit Months (AUMs) in the allotments. A positive benefit would be received through a successful re-vegetation effort, thus increasing preferred forage plants within this low producing rangeland. However, the cumulative impacts from past, present, and possible future oil and gas activities may have a long-term effect on the native range's carrying capacity, thus

influencing the authorized AUMs. This possible affect would be determined during the grazing permit renewal process.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Any livestock control facilities and/or rangeland improvements impacted during this operation will be replaced or repaired to their prior condition.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located within a VRM class IV area. The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The buried pipeline would create a linear disturbance that would be visible for a short period of time-or until the reseeded area establishes vegetation. The proposed action would not involve removing any woody vegetation. The proposed action would not dominate the view of a casual observer and the objectives of the VRM IV classification would be retained.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no additional environmental consequences.

Mitigation: None

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Cumulative impacts from oil and gas development were analyzed in the White River Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) completed in June 1996. Current development, including the proposed action, has not exceeded the cumulative impacts from the foreseeable development analyzed in the PRMP/FEIS.

REFERENCES CITED:

Larralde, Signa L.
1981 Cultural Resource Inventory of A Sample of BLM Lands in the Rangely Oil Field, Rio Blanco County, Northwestern Colorado. Nickens and Associates, Montrose, Colorado.

Tweto, Ogden
1979 Geologic Map of Colorado. United States Geologic Survey, Department of the Interior, Reston, Virginia.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: None

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Robert Fowler	Forester	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife
Bo Brown	Hazmat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Soils
Jed Carling	Rangeland Specialist	Vegetation
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Jed Carling	Rangeland Specialist	Rangeland Management
Linda Jones	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Keith Whitaker	Natural Resource Specialist	Visual Resources
Valerie Dobrich	Natural Resource Specialist	Wild Horses

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

CO-110-2005-004-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve development of the flowlines as described in the proposed action, with mitigation measures listed below. This development, with mitigation, is consistent with the decisions in the White River ROD/RMP, and environmental impacts will be minimal.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. Water spreading should be required on the road surfaces to control fugitive dust and to help minimize short-term impacts.

2. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has

been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

4. Earthwork involving prairie dog burrow systems should be conducted outside the period of April 1 to July 15 to avoid the remote chance of disrupting the reproductive activities of ferrets, burrowing owl, and prairie dogs. Any surface disturbance associated with these injection lines should be revegetated and rehabilitated with the appropriated seed mixture and reclamation technique(s) as is required by the Authorized Officer.

5. In the event earthwork associated with this project cannot be completed prior to early April, BLM would conduct nest surveys on affected injection line segments and conditions of approval would be applied to defer activities that may interfere with successful nest outcomes (under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act).

6. The operator should be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed actions.

7. Re-establishing vegetation as soon as allowable would be favorable to control any erosion problems that may occur. Best management practices should be implemented to collect salts leaching from soils if it becomes a problem on the surface. In addition, the following COA from Appendix B, White River ROD/RMP should be applied:

> When erosion is anticipated, sediment barriers should be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site. In addition, straining or filtration mechanisms may also contribute to sediment removal from runoff.

8. All disturbed areas should be promptly revegetated associated with the proposed action, with Standard Seed Mix #1 of the White River ROD/RMP (Page B-19, Appendix B). Seeding rates in the RMP are shown as pounds of Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre and apply to drill seeding. For broadcast application, double the seeding rate and then harrow to insure seed coverage. The applicant should be responsible for eradicating cheatgrass, noxious weeds, and/or problem weeds should they occur and/or increase in density as a result of the proposed action. The applicant should use materials and methods authorized in advance by the White River Field Office Manager.

Standard Seed Mix #1

Seed Mix #	Species (Variety)	Lbs PLS/ Acre	Range sites
1	Siberian wheatgrass (P27) Russian wildrye (Bozoisky) Crested wheatgrass (Hycrest)	3 2 3	Alkaline Uplands, Badlands, Clayey 7"-9", Clayey Salt Desert, Cold Desert Breaks, Cold Desert Overflow, Gravelly 7"-9", Limey Cold Desert, Loamy 7"-9",

Seed Mix #	Species (Variety)	Lbs PLS/ Acre	Range sites
			Loamy Cold Desert, Loamy Salt Desert, Saline Lowland, Salt Desert Breaks, Salt Flats, Salt Meadow Sands 7"-9", Sandy 7"-9", Sandy Cold Desert, Sandy Salt Desert, Shale 7"-9", Shale/Sands Complex, Shallow Loamy, Shallow Sandy, Shallow Slopes, Silty Salt Desert, Silty Swale, Steep

9. If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during project activities, the operator should immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials, and contact the authorized officer (AO). The operator and the authorized officer should consult and determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

10. Any livestock control facilities and/or rangeland improvements impacted during this operation should be replaced or repaired to their prior condition.

NAME OF PREPARER: Tamara Meagley 12-03-2004

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 12/03/04

ATTACHMENTS: Location map of the proposed action.

Location of Proposed Action
CO-110-2005-004-EA